



## King County

Department of Transportation

Metro Transit Division

201 S. Jackson Street

KSC-TR-0415

Seattle, WA 98104-3856

March 2, 2015

Shari Russell

Industrial Hygiene Compliance Inspector

Division of Safety and Health

Department of Labor & Industries

315 Fifth Ave S, Suite 200

Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Update and request for extension of the correction due date for Citation and Notice #317378149

Dear Ms. Russell:

This letter responds to Citation and Notice #317378149, inspection #578037394, issued to King County Metro Transit, P.O. Box 80283, Seattle, WA 98108-9007, phone 206-477-6860 (Metro Transit Safety).

I am writing to give you an update on the actions Metro is taking to improve our restroom program for bus operators. As we agreed to do at a recent meeting with your staff, we will provide quarterly progress reports and requests for extensions of the correction due date through the end of the year. At this time I am requesting an extension of the correction due date to June 30, 2015.

### **Background**

On December 22, 2014, Metro requested and was subsequently granted an extension of the correction date to March 2, 2015 for the following violation:

**Violation 1, Item 1 of Citation and Notice # 317378149:** "King County Metro did not provide transit operators with unrestricted access to bathroom facilities when needed to relieve themselves in the following circumstances: bathrooms are not available during all hours of each route service; bathrooms are not located at each route terminal within a distance that can be accessed during the scheduled recovery time; operators have been disciplined for running late due to time spent using a bathroom or search for an available public bathroom."

### **Recent Actions to Mitigate Restroom Access and Complete Abatement**

The following is a summary of steps Metro has taken since December 22, 2014 to correct the hazard, and planned actions that require more time to complete.

*Key actions Metro has taken between December 22, 2014 and March 2, 2015:*

#### **Planning and policy**

- Identified transit routes to target for restroom access improvements in 2015.

- Identified and began restroom access improvements that could be made quickly (Phase 1 – by March 2015; plan attached).
- Agreed on a plan to relocate the Route 73 north terminal from a residential neighborhood to a site adjacent to comfort station #429, in QFC at 1531 NE 145th St, Seattle. This restroom is available from 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. The target date for this change is June 6, 2015.
- Agreed on a plan to relocate the Route 245 south terminal to Eastgate Park and Ride. The current routing will be maintained with service continued back to Eastgate Park and Ride, where there is a Metro-owned restroom. The target date for this change is June 6, 2015.
- Developed an initial draft Operator Restroom Policy.

#### **Program staffing**

- Hired an interim, full-time Comfort Station Coordinator on Jan. 23 solely dedicated to the management of the Comfort Station Program until a permanent coordinator is hired.
- Advertised the permanent, full-time Comfort Station Coordinator position.

#### **Long-term solution for Othello Terminal**

- Reached agreement with the Seattle Housing Authority for bus drivers to have access to the restrooms at the YWCA (The Willows), 3800 S Myrtle St, Seattle. This is across the street from the Othello Terminal served by Routes 36 and 50. These restrooms are available to bus drivers during all transit service hours. The portable restroom previously used has been removed.

#### **Additional access in Seattle Central Business District**

- Reached agreement with La Quinta Inn at 2224 Eighth Ave, Seattle for bus drivers to have access to their restrooms during all transit service hours.
- Reached agreement with Hotel Andra at 2000 Fourth Avenue, Seattle for bus drivers to have access to their restrooms during all transit service hours.
- Reached agreement with Bed, Bath, and Beyond at 1930 Third Avenue, Seattle, for bus drivers to have access to their restrooms during business hours (Mon. – Sat., 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Sun. 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.).

#### **Additional access in other areas**

- Reached agreement with the ARCO AM/PM service station at 15252 International Blvd for bus drivers to have access to their restrooms during all transit service hours. This AM/PM is across the street from the Tukwila International Boulevard Station and will provide restroom access for the bus drivers of Route 124 and the RapidRide E Line.
- Reached agreement with the Subway restaurant at 8757 Holman Rd, Seattle for bus drivers to have access to restrooms from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., providing access for Route 15X drivers during all service hours.
- Reached agreement with Cheap Smokes at 9450 35th Ave SE, Seattle for bus drivers to have access to their restrooms from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. This is the terminal for Route 21X.

- Reached agreement with Maplewood Golf Course, 4050 SE Maple Valley Highway, Renton for bus drivers to have access to their restrooms between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. This is a terminal for Route 102.
- Confirmed Target store at 1215 N Landing Way, Renton as a location for bus drivers to access restrooms during business hours, augmenting other restrooms available to drivers in this area. This is a terminal for the RapidRide F Line.
- Confirmed Target store at 2800 SW Barton St, Seattle as a location for bus drivers to access restrooms during business hours, augmenting other restrooms available to drivers in this area. This is a terminal for the RapidRide C Line and other routes.

### **Monitoring**

- Continued to review and confirm the availability of all comfort stations listed in Metro's Route Book, so that an up-to-date list can be included in the revised Route Book published and distributed to bus drivers in May, before Metro's June service change.
- Completed field inspections and prepared report cards on existing conditions of 250 of the 274 restrooms in Metro's Comfort Station Program. The remaining restrooms will be checked by March 6, 2015.

### **Communications**

- The interim Comfort Station Coordinator is regularly receiving questions and comments about comfort stations from bus drivers via emails, phone calls and Comfort Station Report forms. The Coordinator is responding to most contacts within one or two business days.
- Continued to hold monthly meetings with ATU Local 587 to review the status of the Comfort Station Program.

### *Actions Metro plans to take:*

- Implement restroom access improvements that may involve changes to bus routing, terminal locations, or bus schedules (Phase 2 – April to December 2015; plan attached).
- Continue developing an Operator Restroom Policy that will establish goals, procedures and reporting requirements to be followed by the Comfort Station Program.
- Hire a permanent, full-time, dedicated Comfort Station Program Coordinator by April 6, 2015.
- Conduct quarterly field inspections and prepare report cards on conditions for all restrooms in Metro's comfort station program.
- Continue holding monthly meetings with ATU Local 587 to review status of the Comfort Station Program.
- Relocate the Route 73 north terminal and the Route 245 south terminal to locations where restrooms are available, as described under "Planning and policy" in the list above.
- Define locations where the construction of restroom capital projects would be practical and financially prudent (Phase 3 – 2016-2017; plan to be included in next quarterly report).

- The Comfort Station Coordinator will begin formal quarterly outreach meetings at bus operations bases to review drivers' comfort station issues and improvements (March 2015).
- The Comfort Station Coordinator will begin attending monthly Base Safety Committee meetings to review comfort station issues and concerns (March 2015).

For more details about Metro's actions in response to Violation 1, Item 1, please see the following attachments:

1. An updated table summarizing the Driver Comfort Station Abatement Plan, dated March 2, 2015.
2. A table summarizing Metro bus routes targeted for restroom access improvements in 2015, dated March 2, 2015.
3. A copy of the posting and announcement for the full-time Comfort Station Program Coordinator position.
4. Copies of the Comfort Stations Bulletins dated Feb. 9, 2015 and March 2, 2015.

Metro has taken additional actions to fully correct the following violation:

**Violation 2, Item 1 of Citation and Notice # 317378149:** "The employer did not provide a compliant clean washing facility with paper towels and hot and cold water or lukewarm (tepid) running water, and handsoap at the Porta-Potty provided as the Othello Terminal restroom for over 6 years. Cited for not providing paper towels and hot and cold water or lukewarm (tepid) running water in each bathroom or comfort station."

*Actions Metro has taken:*

- Installed a new portable restroom that is equipped with a sink, running water, soap and hand towels at the Othello location on December 15, 2014.
- Reached agreement with the Seattle Housing Authority for bus drivers to have access to the restrooms at the YWCA (The Willows), 3800 S Myrtle St, Seattle across the street from the Othello Terminal served by Routes 36 and 50. These restrooms became available on February 17, 2015 and are available to bus drivers during all transit service hours. With this long-term solution in place for the Othello Terminal, the portable restroom was removed on February 20, 2015.

With this compliant, long-term solution in place, Metro requests that Violation 2, Item 1 be considered as fully abated.

### **Conclusion – Request for an Extension of Abatement**


Metro is committed to rebuilding the Comfort Station Program and ensuring that all bus drivers have access to restrooms as needed. We are continuing to comprehensively assess the issues and develop solutions for giving bus drivers access to restrooms throughout our large service area. Given the scope and time needed for this effort, we request an additional extension of the correction due date for Citation and Notice #317378149, Violation 1, Item 1, from the current date of March 2,

Department of Labor & Industries  
March 2, 2015  
Page 5 of 5

2015 to June 30, 2015. We appreciate your assistance and support as we continue our work to create sustainable solutions.

If you have questions or concerns about the requested extension or the actions described herein or in the attachments, please contact me at [rob.gannon@kingcounty.gov](mailto:rob.gannon@kingcounty.gov) or 206-477-5911, or Transit Safety Officer Darryl Russell at [Darryl.Russell@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Darryl.Russell@kingcounty.gov) or 206 477-6860.

Sincerely,



Rob Gannon, Deputy General Manager  
King County Metro Transit

Enclosures

cc: John Stebbins, IH Compliance Supervisor, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries  
Harold S. Taniguchi, Director, King County Department of Transportation (DOT)  
Kevin Desmond, General Manager, Metro Transit Division, DOT